

DICK SCOBEE MEETING NOTES - December 16, 2008



On December 16, 2008 the City of Auburn Mayor and City staff met with residents of the Dick Scobee Neighborhood at Dick Scobee Elementary School, 1031 14th Street NE, to discuss neighborhood concerns.

Staff in Attendance: MAYOR PETE LEWIS, COMMUNITY SERVICES PROJECT ASSISTANT KIRSTEN REYNOLDS, ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF BOB KARNOFSKI, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS OFFICER ANDY GOULD, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER CHRIS HANKINS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MANAGER SARAH MILLER

Community Members in Attendance: DOUG ORR, REBECCA OLSON, GRAHAM MACKENZIE, COLLEEN AND SCOTT GEORGE AND CLAY LANGSTON

Welcome and Introductions:

Mayor Pete Lewis opened the meeting by welcoming neighbors and introducing City staff. This meeting was held to help residents of the Dick Scobee neighborhood deal with several issues. Mayor Lewis quickly made some opening statements before moving into the Police issues.

- People were invited to sign up for the Mayor's weekly update. Every Friday Mayor Lewis sends out an update about what's been happening in the city. He also sends out emergency traffic, weather and local events information as needed.
- Mayor Lewis shared the most recent storm update from the National Weather Advisory. The crews at Maintenance and Operations will be focused on plowing, sanding and deicing the hillsides and major arterials, intersections, bridges, over and underpasses are the first focus, if they have time remaining between each pass they will try to work on the smaller streets. Mayor Lewis explained the City never had much money so the basic philosophy has always been 'if the street is flat drive slow' while we work on the more dangerous areas.

General Questions/Comments

- ***What should citizens do when they see or hear something suspicious?***
Residents were encouraged to report everything to 911. We, the citizens of Auburn, own the 911 system. PLEASE NOTE: If calling from a cell phone residents need to ask for an "Auburn Call Receiver." You should call 911 whenever you have an emergency, feel something suspicious is going on, need to speak with an officer or file a report. (For your convenience our online reporting system at http://www.auburnwa.gov/police/online_reporting.asp is also available 24 hours a day if you would prefer to file your report that way.) In addition to emergency issues, residents should also call 911 for non-emergency issues such as street lights out, stop lights out, missing stop signs, fireworks, loose dogs, sewer backups, water leaks, etc.

Auburn shares ownership of the 911 system with other South King County cities and the calls go to a dispatch center so residents shouldn't worry about tying up the phone line when making non-emergency calls. When you call 911 (from a landline) it will be answered by an

Auburn “Call Receiver.” The Call Receiver will determine whether or not your call is an emergency to be handled right away or to have an officer make contact with you to file a non-emergency report. They will ask questions which are specifically designed to obtain information so that the proper response can be made for your call.

- ***Afraid to call 911?***

Phone calls to 9-1-1 can be completely anonymous. Residents can request an officer follow up with a phone call instead of a home visit, or if preferred, not at all. Prior 9-1-1 calls can be canceled if an officer hasn’t responded yet and there is no longer a threat.

- ***Should we call the City when there is a power outage?***

Ultimately, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) fixes all power outages in the area; informing the City could help get a faster response. Residents should call the Auburn 911 system with the exact location where the power is out (if calling from a cell phone, ask for an “Auburn Call Receiver”).

Police Related Questions/Comments

- Assistant Police Chief Bob Karnofski explained Auburn has 102 commissioned Police officers that patrol six sectors. The Dick Scobee neighborhood is located in sector two; Assistant Chief Karnofski will inform the sector two Sergeant about the increased frequency of break-ins. Police calls are prioritized by threat to life or property first. Residents were encouraged to keep the Police informed of criminal activity happening so officers can be proactive in catching any suspects. The more residents call 9-1-1 the more likely the police will catch the burglars.

- ***How does Block Watch work?***

Community Programs Officer Andy Gould gave an overview of the Block Watch program. Block Watch is built on the concept of neighbors watching out for each other, because they know better than anyone else who belongs in a neighborhood and who doesn’t. If you think “maybe I should call 9-1-1 about this,” you should. Residents were encouraged to set up a Block Watch. Once the group is formed Officer Gould will come out and have a formal training regarding what to watch for, how to react and how to get more neighborhood participation. It is recommended that Block Watch groups get together at least once a quarter. A gathering could include hosting a National Night Out (NNO) party which takes place annually on the first Tuesday in August. NNO provides an opportunity to increase awareness and safety in the neighborhood; the Mayor and Councilmembers take part in NNO every year.

- ***What are some Block Watch tips?***

Call 9-1-1 on any suspicious people. School aged kids walking down the street during school hours could be suspicious people; kids should be in school, not walking down your street looking into vehicle windows. When Police respond, a field interview will be conducted; this gives the Police some personal information. Once personal information is collected the kids are less likely to do something illegal. Officers can respond quickly if in the area but keep in mind if there are major events happening response times will be longer. A few other Block Watch tips include securing outside door frames with longer screws, keeping landscaping trimmed and installing outside lighting. Criminals look for the most reward with the least amount of risk.

- ***Do you suspect drug activity in the neighborhood?***

The Police Department has an on-line narcotics activity report form that residents can fill out if they suspect drug activity. Residents were encouraged to report any information they may have.

- ***What to do about ongoing problems with Graffiti?***

Property owners and neighborhoods have repetitively struggled with graffiti issues. City Code required property owners to remove graffiti within 15 days; a new Graffiti Removal Assistance Program was created in partnership with Parker Paint to help property owners take action. If neighborhoods are having graffiti problems they should call the City's Code Enforcement Division to report the problem (253-931-3090); the Code Enforcement officer will open a case and call your information into Parker Paint. Residents can go to the Parker Paint in Auburn and pick up supplies to cover the graffiti. Additionally, Auburn City Council has enacted a law that spray paint cannot be sold to anyone under 18 years old.

Graffiti problems have also been widely tied to gang activity. The City has been working extensively with the Auburn School District to identify youth getting involved in gangs; both partners are working proactively to end their involvement.

- ***Can I install a surveillance camera?***

Video surveillance cameras have become a popular security measure for individual homeowners and Homeowner Associations. Surveillance cameras can be a deterrent to criminal activity and a record when criminal activity occurs that can assist police in identifying the perpetrator(s).

In order for a recorded video of criminal incidents identifying suspects to be of assistance to the police department it must have a compatible recording format and possess sufficient resolution capabilities during both low light and daytime recording. Additionally, the recordings cannot violate certain privacy laws if it's to be used in a criminal proceeding.

- ***Are on-line reports as effective as talking to a Police officer?***

Every on-line report is reviewed and responded to electronically. On-line reports give residents the opportunity to file claims 24 hours a day without having to talk to an officer; electronic documents are provided that can be used for home owners insurance. If desired, there is an option to have an officer do a follow up call to your claim. (For your convenience the online reporting system is at http://www.auburnwa.gov/police/online_reporting.asp.)

- ***Disaster Preparedness Presentation***

Emergency Preparedness Manager Sarah Miller gave a brief presentation regarding the programs citizens can participate in to prepare their homes, families and neighborhoods in case of an emergency. Ms. Miller talked about CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Team); in this class series individuals learn first aid, triage and survival skills. The next CERT class is scheduled to start in January; classes will be taught on Tuesday mornings (January 13, 20, 27 and February 3, 10, 17) from 9am-noon, there will be two Saturday drills (January 31, and February 21) from 8am-noon.

Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) is a neighborhood-based disaster preparedness program designed to help organized neighborhoods become prepared for a disaster. The program is designed for individual neighborhoods to come together for a 90-minute session and do basic disaster planning that will assist them in the first 60 minutes of a disaster.

Traffic Related Questions/Comments

- Increased traffic was reported on 10th Street; people don't believe this is a dead end street. At night you can see headlights through the fence so people drive down the road thinking they can exit. Even the dead end sign at the beginning of the street doesn't seem to help.

- There are constant speeding issues in front of Dick Scobee Elementary School. Street racers try to go as fast as possible before the speed bump; racing usually starts around 10:00 p.m. Residents have reported the incidents to 9-1-1 but the racers are gone before the Police can respond. Mayor Lewis advised residents to continue calling to register the illegal activity; with 26 new officers hired and because their offices are their cars, they can respond faster. Sooner or later the street racers will be caught.

Summary of Solutions Discussed/Action Items

- Next step is to set up the Block Watch after the holidays with a date and time that works for the neighborhood. Officer Gould will work with the Block Watch Captain to set the date and time. Emergency Management staff will be invited to start the map your neighborhood program.
- Once the Block Watch is formalized, the group will help determine where Block Watch signs should be installed; the City will come out and install the signs.

Community Services Team Contact Information:

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